

Applicant: Zoning, Building, Planning and Environmental Health Department

Agent: N/A

Location: The area from the west side of the Rio Grande crossing to Goff Blvd, a distance of about one mile.

Recommendation: Approval



Summary: The design overlay applies to all parcels that abut Bridge Boulevard and are outside of the Albuquerque municipal limits. As an addendum to the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan, this Design Overlay keeps the current zoning designations intact and does not propose any modifications to them. The Design Overlay has two major components: one set of standards that address the Bridge Boulevard right-of-way and one set of standards that apply to parcels of land abutting Bridge Boulevard. The proposed improvements to the public right-of-way will be implemented by the County. The design standards for properties adjacent to Bridge will be administered by the County as part of typical site plan review.

Staff Planner: Enrico Gradi, Program Planner

Attachments

1. Application
2. Land Use Map
3. Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay Plan (Commissioners Only)

Bernalillo County Departments and other agencies reviewed this application from to 7/26/2010 to 8/09/2010. Their comments were used in preparation of this report, and begin on Page 12.

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 12
County Planning Commission
September 1, 2010

- SPR-20100001 Zoning, Building, Planning & Environmental Health Department requests approval of the Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay Zone. The purpose is to promote safety, economic development, and historic character of the corridor through guidelines and standards for new and existing development.

BACKGROUND:

The Request

Bridge Boulevard is an historic corridor that carries more than 30,000 cars per day across the Rio Grande and through the heart of the South Valley. In response to concerns about safety and building conditions along the corridor, Bernalillo County initiated this project to create a design overlay for Bridge Boulevard, from the Eastside Drain to Goff Avenue. The purpose of the Design Overlay is to promote safety, spur economic development, and celebrate the historic character of the corridor through a comprehensive set of standards and guidelines for both the street itself and adjacent properties. Bridge Boulevard today is a mix of small scale commercial uses mixed with lots of varying size and shape. Although, the majority of the lots are zoned for commercial uses, there are a number of lots and structures that are residential in nature. Despite the large volume of traffic, commercial businesses struggle to remain viable. Traffic congestion is an issue and the corridor has a high rate of pedestrian accidents.

Public Involvement

At the outset of this project, the County hosted public forums to solicit input and discuss ideas on how to improve the area. On April 21st, the County held a forum at the South Valley Economic Development Center. The County hosted a second forum at the Westside Community Center on June 15th. Property owners along Bridge Boulevard were notified by certified letters. Both forums were well attended and resulted in a positive dialogue about the corridor. In addition to the public forums, staff has had numerous meetings and discussions with property owners and individuals who reside or own property with the plan area and in the general vicinity.

The Plan

The Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay covers the area from the west side of the Rio Grande crossing to Goff Blvd, a distance of about one mile. The design overlay applies to all parcels that abut Bridge Boulevard and are outside of the Albuquerque municipal limits. As an addendum to the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan, this Design Overlay keeps the current zoning designations intact and does not propose any modifications to them. The Isleta Boulevard Sector Development Village Center zone (SD-IVC) still applies to parcels from the Eastside Drain to Hartline Road. The only difference is that those parcels, like others that abut Bridge Boulevard will be subject to the design guidelines and requirements detailed in this document.

The Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay has two major components, one set of development standards that address the Bridge Boulevard right-of-way and one set of standards that apply to parcels of land abutting Bridge Boulevard. The proposed improvements to the public right-of-way will be implemented by the County as resources

become available. The design standards for properties adjacent to Bridge will be administered by the County staff as part of typical site plan reviews. They will apply to new construction and projects that impact 200 square feet or more of an existing structure.

The proposed standards for the public right-of-way include the following:

- Improved crosswalks and pedestrian safety
- More contiguous sidewalks with fewer curb cuts
- Cohesive landscaping along medians, sidewalks, and parking lots
- Gateway features at the east and west ends of the corridor
- Street lighting that reflects the historic character of the area
- Screening of mechanical equipment on roofs and in yards
- Color, signage, and wall standards for new and existing development

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES:

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan

The Bernalillo County Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay Zone is located within two Comprehensive Plan Boundaries; the boundaries include the Developing Urban Area and the Semi-Urban Area. The area north of Bridge Boulevard is designated as the Developing Urban area and the area south of Bridge Boulevard is designated as Semi Urban.

The Developing Urban Area:

The principal Goal for the area of the Comprehensive Plan is to create a quality urban environment which perpetuates the tradition of identifiable, individual but integrated communities within the metropolitan area and which offers variety and maximum choice in housing, transportation, work areas and lifestyles, while creating a visually pleasing built environment.

Policy a states that “the Established and developing Urban Areas shall allow a full range of urban land uses, resulting in an overall gross density of up to five dwelling units per acre.”

Policy d states that “the location, intensity, and design of new development shall respect existing neighborhood values, natural environmental conditions and carrying capacities, scenic resources and resources of other social, cultural, or recreational concern.”

Policy e states, “new growth shall be accommodated through development of areas where vacant land is contiguous to existing or programmed urban facilities and services and where the integrity of existing neighborhoods can be assured.”

Policy f states that “clustering of homes to provide larger shared open areas and houses oriented toward pedestrian of bikeways shall be encouraged.”

Policy g states “development shall be carefully designed to conform to topographical features and include trail corridors in the development where appropriate.”

Policy i states that “employment and service uses shall be located to complement residential areas and shall be sited to minimize adverse effects of noise, lighting, pollution, and traffic on residential environments.”

Policy j states “where new commercial development occurs, it should generally be located in existing commercially zoned areas as follows:

- In small neighborhood-oriented centers provided with pedestrian and bicycle access within reasonable distance of residential areas for walking or bicycling.
- In larger area wide shopping centers located at intersections of arterial streets and provided with access via mass transit; more that one shopping center should be allowed at an intersection only when transportation problems do not result.
- In free standing retailing and contiguous storefronts along streets in older neighborhoods.

Policy k states that “land adjacent to arterial streets shall be planned to minimize harmful effects of traffic; livability and safety of established residential neighborhoods shall be protected in transportation operations.”

Policy l states that "quality and innovation in design shall be encouraged in all new development design shall be encouraged which is appropriate for the plan area.”

Policy m states that "urban and site design which maintains and enhances unique vistas and improves the quality of the visual environment shall be encouraged.”

The Semi Urban Area:

The Goal in the Comprehensive Plan is to “maintain the character and identify of semi urban areas, which have environmental, social or cultural conditions limiting urban land uses.”

Land Use:

Policy a states that “development in the semi-urban area shall be consistent with development limitations imposed by topography, soil conditions, groundwater quality,

agricultural potential, flood potential, scenic qualities, recreation potential and existing development; the overall gross density shall be up to three dwelling units per acre."

Policy b states "development in semi-urban areas shall include trail corridors, where appropriate, and shall be compatible with economic policies and historical and socio-cultural values, and shall maintain and integrate existing and new buildings and spaces of local significance into the community."

Policy c states that

- "Mixed use areas should protect residential uses in the area, while offering a variety of local employment opportunities."
- "Strip commercial development is discouraged in favor of clustered commercial development."

The site is within the Semi Urban Area as designated in the Comprehensive Plan. The goal in the Comprehensive Plan is to "maintain the character and identify of semi urban areas, which have environmental, social or cultural conditions limiting urban land uses."

Southwest Area Plan (SWAP)

Policy 1 states "Techniques to ensure water quality and to enhance water conservation shall be established by the appropriate governmental agencies to enforce policies adopted in the Ground-Water Protection Policy and Action Plan and to prevent further groundwater contamination in the Plan area."

Policy 5 states "As development occurs in the Plan area, provisions shall be made to ensure erosion is controlled during and after construction. Runoff and erosion controls shall be developed throughout Soil Conservation Service Zones 3 & 4 to protect Zone 5."

Policy 6 states "Specific land use regulations, with performance and improvement standards, shall be created to protect agricultural lands."

Policy 8 states " Isleta Boulevard shall be recognized and treated as a historic route Any modifications on Isleta Boulevard shall protect, rehabilitate, restore and enhance the historic, cultural and economic significance of this important segment of the "Camino Real."

Policy 9 states "Additional historic routes, scenic corridors and easements, including historic acequias, streetscapes and built environment, shall be recognized and integrated into future plans, subdivisions and development."

Policy 10 states “to protect the fragile landforms and air quality in the plan area, new development or major modifications to existing roads and other major public facilities shall adapt to the existing natural environment, topography, soils, vegetation, geology, and hydrology.”

Policy 11 states “All roads and arterials shall maintain continuity with regards to drainage, design and landscape. These arterials shall be comprehensive in design and scope to include the community’s goals and objectives, including pedestrian and bicycle amenities, mass transit potential and landscaping.”

Policy 16 states “The County and City shall continue to work closely with other agencies as trail corridor planning occurs within the Plan area. Design and safety measures shall be a prime consideration in location and construction of trails.”

Policy 17 states “All roadways shall be planned, designed, constructed and improved for the safety of pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists, as well as access to commercial uses of various scale.

Policy 21 states ”The five historic village centers, as identified on the following map, shall reintegrate historic buildings and sites of local interest, and function as an area to meet the community’s day-to-day needs.”

Policy 22 states “Mixed use development within C-N and C-1 zoning shall be encouraged within historic village centers and on Isleta Boulevard between Bridge and Camino del Valle, to allow owners to reside at their place of business.”

Policy 23 states “Sector development plans, public facilities plans and corridor plans shall be developed to further address subareas or portions of the plan area.

Policy 30 state “ Standards for outdoor lighting shall be implemented to ensure that their use does not interfere with the night sky environment and unnecessarily adjacent properties.”

- a. Outdoor light poles within residential areas should not exceed sixteen (16) feet in height above existing grade; when mounted on buildings or structures, fixtures should not exceed twelve (12) feet from existing grade.

Policy 31 “Provide pedestrian connections through mixed-use areas and activity centers, and separation between parking and pedestrian circulation for public safety and general welfare of the area residents.”

Policy 32 states “Increase the visual character and quality of the streetscape and overall development by encouraging enhanced use of required perimeter walls.”

- a. Discourage long expanses of uninterrupted wall surface and encourage walls

to be indented, offset, or in a serpentine form to avoid a tunnel effect.

Policy 33 states "Promote safe vehicular parking with attention to functional and aesthetic concerns. Oversized parking lots or facilities should be discouraged.

Policy 40 States "Encourage the location of newly developing neighborhood scale commercial and office use to be within their defined village centers.

Policy 42 states "Industrial development shall be in accordance with existing environmental and geological conditions."

- a) Permit industrial economic development where water availability and quality can sustain such industry.
- c) Restrict new industrial development in areas of fragile soil conditions or in geographically unfit areas, unless indisputable evidence is presented that the area will not be adversely affected.
- d) Locate industrial development in areas with appropriate road design, drainage and infrastructure conducive to industrial activity.

Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance

Section 20.5. SD Sector Development Zone.

A. The regulations set forth in this section, or set forth elsewhere in this section, when referred to in this section are the regulations in the Sector Development (SD) Zone. The purpose of this zone is to allow a mixture of uses controlled by a Sector Development Plan which specifies new development and redevelopment that is appropriate to a given neighborhood, when other zones are inadequate to address special needs.

The SD zone is appropriate to map where it is applied to an entire neighborhood or a major segment of a neighborhood, and if it is determined that the area proposed for the sector development plan meets at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) The area is developed such that the requirements of other available zones do not promote the conservation of special neighbored characteristics, which the County desires to preserve; or
- (2) The area has developed or should develop with a pattern of mixed land uses, which will need careful control and coordination of development at a sub-area scale in order to insure a desirable mixture of uses; or

(3) There are factors which substantially impair or arrest the sound growth and economic health and well-being of the area, or the area constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition and use.

B. Use Regulations. The Sector Development Plan shall specify permissive, conditional and prohibited uses for locations within the plan area.

C. Height and Area Regulations. The Sector Development Plan shall specify height and area regulations for uses within the plan area, or shall reference regulations established elsewhere in this section.

D. Landscape and Buffer Landscaping. The Sector Development Plan shall specify landscape and buffer landscaping regulations for uses within the plan area, or shall reference regulations established elsewhere in this section.

E. Parking. The Sector Development Plan shall specify parking regulations for uses within the plan area, or shall reference regulations established elsewhere in this section.

Sector Development Plan Definition

“A plan covering a specific portion of the unincorporated area of Bernalillo County that specifies standards for that area’s development. A sector development plan may establish zoning regulations for an area that differ from those normally allowed, based on unique neighborhood conditions, including allowable uses, densities, building heights, landscaping requirements, signs, parking or other items as determined by the Board of County Commissioners. A sector development plan must be consistent with the policies of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and any applicable area plan adopted for the portion of the County affected by the sector plan.”

ANALYSIS:

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

The area abutting the corridor is predominantly zoned C-1, however there are parcels zoned for residential uses and there are some parcels that are zoned commercial but contain a residence.

Plans

The Southwest Area Plan (SWAP) is identified as a “rank two” Plan which is placed below the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan in terms of the increased level of specificity that is detailed in the document. The SWAP makes general recommendations for land use, development, and community service activities in the area.

On August 28, 2001, the Board of County Commissioners approved the Southwest Area Plan which recommends a Sector Plan be developed to incorporate land use policies that address water and air quality, roadway access, zoning, open space, trails, scale, massing, design and rural character and viable economic development for the South Valley and Southwest Mesa.

This planning effort is supported by Policy 23 of the SWAP, which was adopted in 2001. Policy 23 calls for the establishment of a sector development plans for the South Valley. The proposed Bridge Boulevard Sector Development Plan is consistent with the numerous polices in the SWAP which address land use, design, economic development, neighborhood scale, pedestrian access, scale, massing, design and rural character.

Zoning Section

This Design Overlay does not alter the zoning for properties along Bridge Boulevard. Zoning will continue to follow existing designations and requirements. Parcels That adjoin Bridge Boulevard and are also within the Isleta Boulevard Gateway Village Center zone (from the Eastside Drain to Hartline Road) shall remain consistent With the SD-VC designation that is part of the Isleta Boulevard Sector Development Plan. As proposed, implementation requirement state that any addition to building or structure that is 200 square feet or greater shall necessitate compliance with the design requirements. With regard to color and shading, properties shall have one year from the effective date of this design overlay plan to conform to the color requirements.

Agency Comments

Comments from the Public Works Division state that appropriate recommendations could be included in this plan may be helpful in addressing flooding issues along the corridor. Similarly, comments from AMAFCA state that recently a drainage study for the area south of Bridge has been implemented. The consultant on the study will be evaluating methods to relieve the Bridge Boulevard storm drain to help alleviate flooding along the corridor.

Conclusion

The Bridge Boulevard Corridor is envisioned to be a focal point and gateway to the South Valley. This corridor is intended to contain a mix of residential, retail, and employment opportunities, in a safe and attractive environment.

The Bridge Boulevard Design Overlay Zone provides a framework for economic development efforts by identifying a gateways and design elements that distinguish the corridor. Specific elements such as lighting, signage, landscaping, and building colors help create a more attractive environment and encourage more active investment in the corridor. This area will provide a distinctive entrance to the South Valley across the Rio Grande, and future design elements and development should build upon this entrance.

The plan also identifies Village Centers at Bridge and Isleta, Five Points and Bridge and Goff and Bridge; these Village Centers present economic development opportunities on a larger scale than the rest of the corridor. This plan creates methods to encourage economic development and beautification, such as signage, lighting, walls and fences, parking, vegetation, and architectural design along Bridge Boulevard to Goff Boulevard. These components should help in creating an attractive sense of place and character.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of SPR-20100001

Enrico Gradi
Program Planner

BERNALILLO COUNTY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Building Department:

No adverse comment

Zoning Administrator:

No adverse comment

Environmental Health:

No adverse comment

Zoning Enforcement Manager:

No adverse comment

Fire:

No comment

Public Works:

DRAN:

Listed under the Corridor Design Policy for Open Space is the objective (OS-5) to create district level storm water detention facilities serving multiple sites.

The design does not discuss any plans to meet this objective.

As the south valley area has historically been plagued with flooding problems it would be appropriate to discuss how this plan will help alleviate flooding along the corridor. For example if the curb heights proposed are going to be greater than the existing curb heights the roadways will have a greater capacity to carry storm water to storm water facilities.

DRE:

Streets and roads must comply with the County Street Standards

Parks & Recreation:

No adverse comment

Sheriff's:

No adverse comment

COMMENTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

MRGCOG:

No comment

AMAFCA:

AMAFCA has recently implemented a drainage study for the area south of Bridge. The consultant will be evaluating methods to relieve the Bridge Boulevard storm drain to help alleviate flooding on the road. We are coordinating with Bernalillo County Public Works Division staff.

City Public Works:

No comment

City Open Space:

No comment

City Transportation:

Any proposed development adjacent to City of Albuquerque Existing Roadway System will need to be coordinate with the City's Street Maintenance Section

City Transit: There are a total of 12 bus stops along the Bridge corridor mentioned serving Route #54, Bridge-Westgate route. From Rio Grande to East Isleta there are two bus stops serving there are two bus stops, also part of the 12 stops that serve Route #53 Isleta route also. Please include transit infrastructures to promote transit typed development.

NM Department of Transportation

The NMDOT has no objection to the sector plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS:

South Valley Coalition of Neighborhood Associations

South Valley Alliance

Mountain View Neighborhood Association

